

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Basic Officer Course
The Basic School
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5019

B0330

CONDUCT OF THE PATROL 1

Student Handout

"Officers and men who permit themselves to be surprised deserve to die."

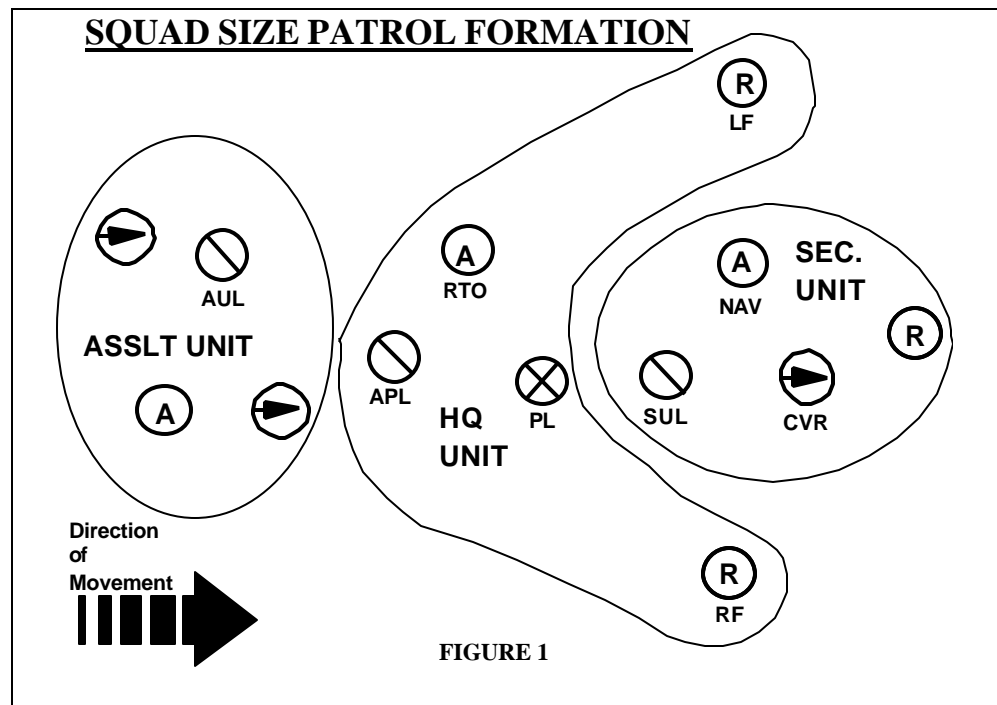
**-D.H. Hill
North Carolina, 1863**

INTRODUCTION

a. *B0328, Introduction to Patrolling* focused on basic patrolling principles and the planning and preparation necessary for squads or platoons to properly execute patrolling operations. This handout outlines many of the basic techniques and procedures used to conduct jungle/forested patrols. An array of patrolling techniques and procedures exists; those discussed within this handout are what we expect you to execute while at The Basic School.

b. *B0334, Combat Orders II* establishes the techniques discussed in this handout as the standard operating procedures for patrolling at The Basic School.

1. **ORGANIZATION FOR MOVEMENT.** Organization for movement is based primarily on the patrol leader's estimate of the situation. Other factors that will influence the patrol's formation are **speed, flexibility, control**, and **all-around security**. It is generally preferred that unit integrity (fireteam/squad) is maintained in organization of patrol subunits. *It is critical that the placement of weapons systems within the formation be given significant consideration* (i.e., SAW gunners should not be tasked with flank security or at the point). Figure 1 illustrates the basic squad-size patrol formation used for patrols conducted in jungle and forest environment. Note the placement of weapon systems within this basic patrol formation.



2. DEPARTURE OF FRIENDLY LINES

a. The patrol's preparation phase is normally conducted in an assembly area located in a protected area behind friendly lines. Here, the assistant patrol leader (APL) conducts last minute preparations while the patrol leader (PL) moves forward to make final coordination for the passage of lines with the **forward unit commander** (FUC). The forward unit commander is responsible for the defense in the area designated for the departure and reentry of the patrol. (Example: rifle company commander or platoon commander maintaining a defensive battle position.)

b. Before leaving the patrol to make final coordination, the **PL leaves the APL with a 5-point contingency plan** which includes: where he is going, others he is taking, time he will be gone, what to do if he does not return, and actions on enemy contact.

c. When making final coordination, the **PL should take at least two men with him for security**. It is also recommended that he take along the navigator who will move to a vantage point to observe as much of the ground in front of friendly lines as terrain and vegetation permit. During final coordination, the PL should request the *latest information on the enemy, terrain, known obstacles beyond the forward unit's battle positions, and the location of any friendly security posts and patrols. The PL confirms frequencies, call signs, challenge and password, and any fire support the unit can provide. A guide from the front line unit will be requested*, and the commander will be notified of the *location of the patrol's assembly area and desired initial rally point (IRP). The PL also informs the commander of the patrol's size, route and whether the patrol will return through the commander's front lines*. If this is the case, the location of the patrol's reentry rally point and a contact point for guide link-up will also be coordinated.

d. After final coordination, the **PL leaves one patrol member with the forward unit commander** (normally the navigator), to coordinate the guide(s) while all other patrol members return to the assembly area. The PL then **briefs the patrol on any updated information and changes to the original plan**.

e. The PL moves the patrol in a tactical patrol column from the assembly area towards the passage lane. During movement to the passage lane, the PL designates the IRP to all members (a pre-designated point behind friendly lines at which the patrol can reorganize if enemy contact is made while departing friendly lines). The IRP should be covered and concealed, and it may be in the same location as the patrol's assembly area.

f. Before entering the passage lane, the patrol assumes a dispersed file with the forward unit's guide leading out the patrol. The APL is positioned behind the guide(s) and is followed by the rest of the patrol. Once through the barrier plan, the **APL then conducts his head count** at the passage point/enemy side (far side) of the barrier plan. Upon passing through the friendly barrier plan, the **patrol immediately transitions into a tactical patrol column and moves out**.

g. Outside friendly lines, the patrol conducts a short security halt so that patrol members may adjust to the sights and sounds of the area. This **security halt should be conducted beyond any friendly security posts and beyond the effects of defensive direct fire weapons**.

3. **CONTROL** The success of a patrol can depend on the ability of the PL to communicate his plan and to effectively integrate the actions of his subordinate units throughout the preparation and conduct phases of the patrol.

a. **Hand and arm signals.** Hand and arm signals are the primary means of communication and control. Hand and arm signals should be given close to the body and below the head. They should be simple, easily understood and known by all patrol members. All patrol members must remain alert to receive and pass all signals. It is not sufficient for patrol members to merely repeat signals; they must ensure adjacent patrol members receive and pass them as well.

b. **Voice.** When not in contact with the enemy, patrol members should use a low voice only when it is necessary to verbalize commands. Whispering can cause a loud hissing noise and can often be misunderstood. When in contact with the enemy, voice commands can be elevated to be heard and understood. Bird and animal sounds should be avoided.

c. **Radio.** Radios are used to report to higher headquarters and to control supporting arms. Transmissions should be **short and concise**. Brevity codes should be used whenever possible as they reduce transmission time. Radios are used to control subordinate units and teams only for larger patrols, and then, only when absolutely necessary.

d. **Head counts.** Head counts are normally conducted after crossing danger areas, security halts, enemy contact and any other time the PL requires one. Head counts are conducted by team and unit leaders and are then passed to the PL through the APL.

4. NAVIGATION

a. The PL is ultimately responsible for navigation though he routinely assigns a Marine to assist him in this task.

b. The patrol is normally assigned checkpoints from higher headquarters to ensure coverage of a specific area.

The patrol route is then divided into legs using these checkpoints. The PL may designate intra-patrol checkpoints as well, but they must be coordinated with higher.

c. Normally two patrol members are assigned as pacers to keep track of distance covered. The pacers should be separated within the patrol formation so they do not influence each other's count. On the PL's order, the pace count is passed forward. The pace count is always given in meters. The two counts will seldom be the same. The average of the two counts can be used as a good approximation of the distance traveled. Checking pace counts at known points allows the PL to gauge the accuracy of his pacers.

5. SECURITY AND MOVEMENT

a. Maintain an even and deliberate pace during movement! As a general rule, a foot patrol will move at a rate of one kilometer per hour during the day and one-half kilometers per hour at night. When moving over difficult terrain and/or at night, the guiding principle is to **maintain contact with the Marine BEHIND you.**

b. Patrols should keep *dispersed to the maximum extent possible*. The **point man moves well ahead of the patrol--as far ahead as visibility and control permit.** The point is not a trail breaker, rather he provides *security to the front* and maintains direction by looking back and orienting on the patrol. The automatic rifleman is normally the cover man and follows in trace of the point man. The **coverman provides fire to the front** if there is enemy contact. **Flanks move as far out as control allows;** their task is to provide observation over the next terrain feature. **Rear security provides protection to the rear**--making frequent visual searches during movement and halts. They do not walk backwards, but rather accomplish this in the following ways:

(1) By moving continuously with the patrol, stopping periodically to observe the area behind the patrol.

(2) By halting for several minutes, observing to the rear as the patrol continues to move, and then moving to regain position in the patrol.

(3) By moving alternately, having one man halt observing to the rear as the other moves ahead with the patrol. The second man then halts, observing to the rear while the first man moves to regain his position within the formation.

c. Areas of responsibility are assigned to the front, flanks, rear, and overhead. All Marines should visually scan their areas of responsibility continuously and should not merely walk along on the patrol.

d. A patrol should avoid skylining itself on ridgelines and topographical crests. Additionally, the patrol should avoid open or exposed areas and make maximum use of existing cover and concealment.

6. HALTS

a. **Short security halt.** During the conduct of a patrol, patrols should halt on occasion to observe and listen for enemy activity. When the PL signals for a short security halt, all patrol members face outboard, take a few steps in the direction of their area of responsibility, and assume a kneeling position. All members must remain still and silent during the halt and focus all attention on their assigned sectors.

b. **Long security halt.** Should the patrol be required to halt for longer than three to five minutes, the PL should designate a long security halt. All around security must be maintained. Each individual is assigned a sector within a hasty perimeter using the clock method. Movement into and out of the perimeter is done with a minimum of movement and adjustment. When departing the perimeter, the patrol moves out one Marine at a time, immediately assuming the patrol formation. (See Figure 2.)

7. RALLY POINTS

a. A rally point (RP) is where a patrol reassembles and reorganizes if dispersed or separated. Occupation of RPs normally occurs after enemy contact. **An RP should be easily recognizable, have good cover and concealment, and be defensible for a short time.** During the planning phase, the PL makes a thorough map study to pick likely rally points. All RPs are tentative and are confirmed or rejected by the PL when the patrol arrives at that location.

b. When a patrol comes across a danger area that cannot be bypassed, rally points are established on both the near and the far sides of the danger area. Furthermore, the PL ensures that the patrol is not separated from the last rally point by extreme distances or obstacles such as difficult terrain or vegetation.

c. Actions to be taken at rally points are planned in detail in the patrol order and during rehearsals. If the patrol is dispersed, Marines will return to the last designated rally point. After waiting a set amount of time, the senior Marine will either continue the mission or return to friendly lines. This decision is based on the GO/NO GO criteria as established in the patrol order. The PL also gives an escape azimuth to allow for stragglers to return to friendly lines.

8. DANGER AREAS

a. A danger area is any location where the patrol is exposed to the possibility of enemy observation or fire. Danger areas can include trails, fire breaks, streams, open fields, and even large wooded areas that have sparse ground vegetation. There are two general classifications of danger areas:

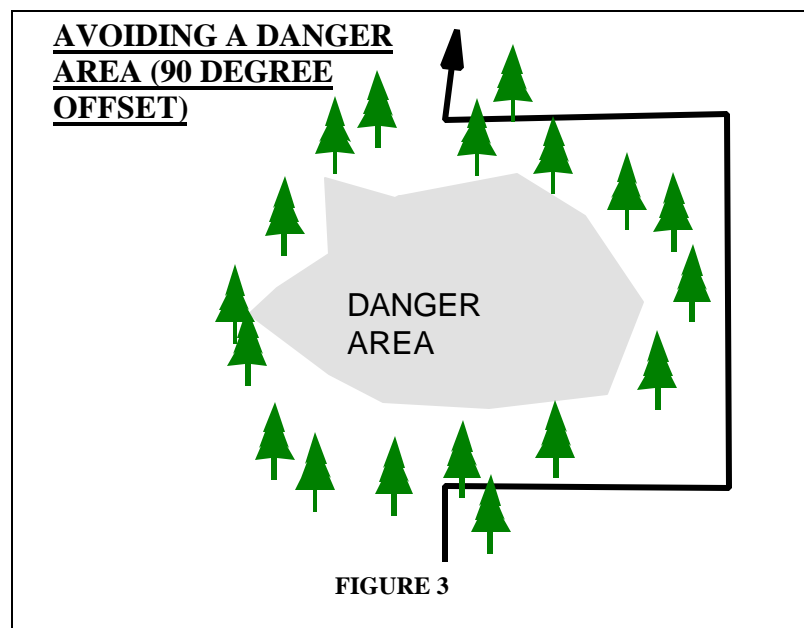
(1) **Linear danger area.** A linear danger area is any location where a patrol is **vulnerable to enemy observation or fire predominantly from the flanks**, such as a trail, road, or stream.

(2) **Cross-compartment danger area.** A cross-compartment danger area is any location where a patrol is **vulnerable to enemy observation or fire from the front and flanks**. The patrol is placed at a positional disadvantage along its direction of movement, such as when moving through a draw.

b. Patrols should always attempt to avoid danger areas. Three considerations should be remembered about danger areas:

- (1) Danger areas can not be ignored.
- (2) The unit should not spend much time dealing with the danger area.
- (3) The unit's direction of movement should not parallel a danger area.

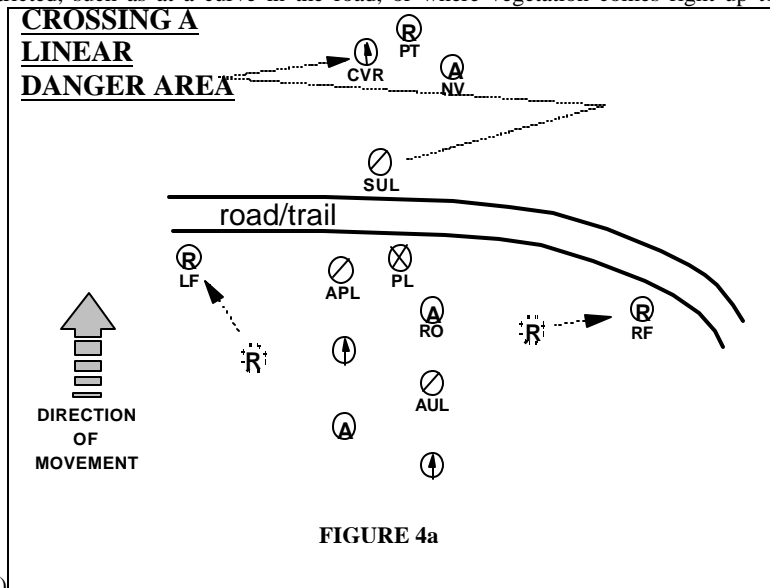
c. **Avoiding a danger area.** Should a patrol come across a danger area, such as a large open field or a wooded area with little or no ground vegetation, it should **attempt to avoid it**. (See Figure 3.)



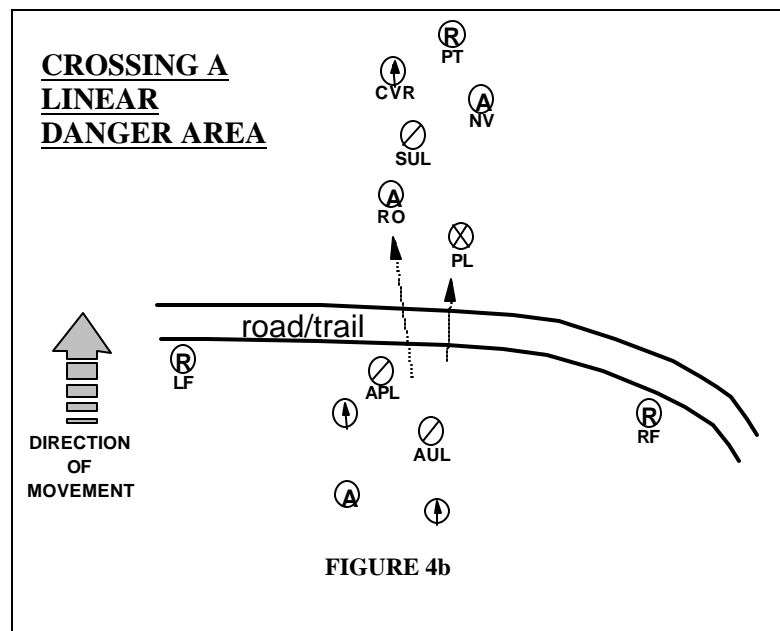
- (1) The PL directs a 90 degree change in azimuth. Pace counters remember the original pace count and start a new pace count.
- (2) When the PL determines that the patrol has gone far enough, he directs a change back to the original azimuth. Pace counters remember the new pace count and resume counting the original pace count.
- (3) When the PL determines that the patrol has passed the far side of the danger area, he directs a 90 degree change in azimuth opposite of that in Step 2. Pace counters return to the pace count used in Step 2.
- (4) When the patrol has traveled the same distance back as it did out, the PL directs a change back to the original azimuth, and the original pace count resumes.

d. **Crossing danger areas.** The method a patrol leader chooses for crossing a danger area depends heavily on a patrol's mission, known and suspected enemy locations, the terrain within and around the danger area, the patrol's size and firepower available to the patrol, and the amount of time the patrol has available to conduct the crossing (METT-T). The danger area crossing techniques discussed below are for those circumstances where time is not a significant factor and contact with the enemy is likely.

(1) **Crossing a linear danger area.** The patrol should cross a linear danger area where observation is restricted, such as at a curve in the road, or where vegetation comes right up to both sides of the road. (See Figures 4a and



4b.)



(a) When the point man comes upon what he believes to be a danger area, he halts the patrol and signals for the PL to come forward. The PL puts the patrol in a short security halt and moves forward to join the point man. After confirming it as a danger area, the PL passes the hand and arm signal for linear danger area to the patrol. Flank security recons the flanks and positions to observe possible enemy approaching from the flanks. PL designates near and far side rally points.

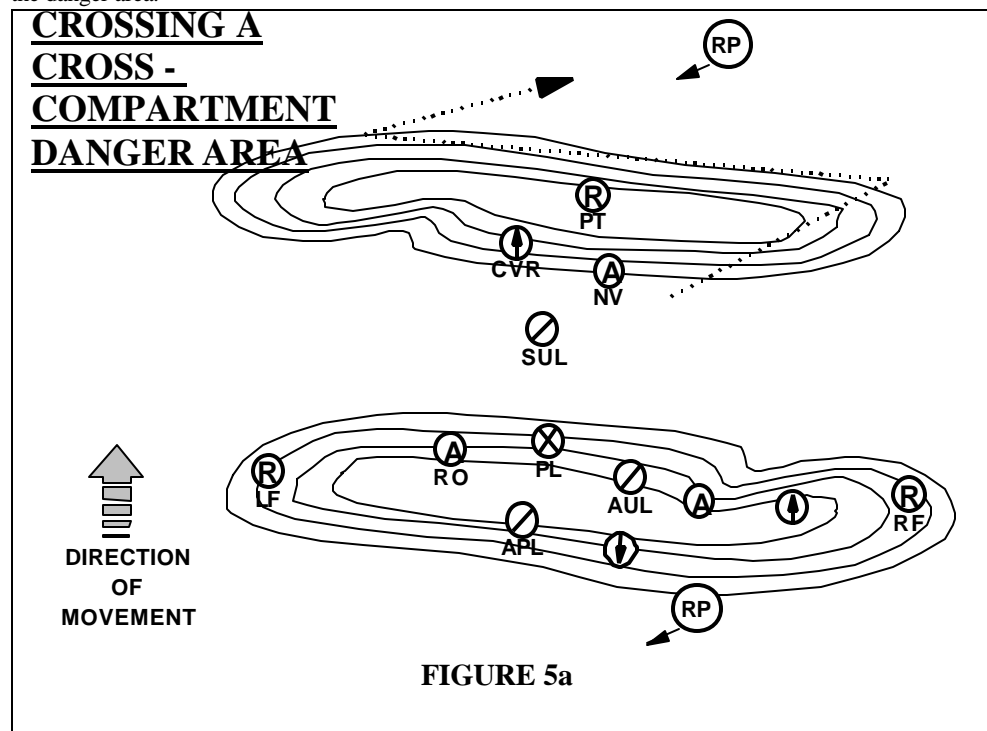
(b) The PL directs security unit to cross the danger area and recon the far side.

(c) Upon crossing the danger area, the security unit leader positions himself on the far side while the point, cover, and the navigator conduct a **far side recon** to ensure the far side of the danger area is clear of enemy. The area covered by the far side recon must be large enough to allow for the patrol to reorganize into its formation for movement after crossing. *Different techniques for conducting far side recons include the box recon, the heart-shaped recon, and the zig-zag recon. Appendix A depicts each of these techniques and lists the general advantages and disadvantages of each.* While at The Basic School, you will conduct the **zig-zag recon** for far side danger areas recons.

(d) Upon completion of the far side recon, the point and cover remain in position at 12 o'clock to provide security to the front. The navigator signals to the security unit leader that the area is clear. The security unit leader signals back to the PL that it is safe to cross.

(e) Depending on the situation, the patrol will cross individually, in pairs, or by units. The crossing is controlled by the APL. The PL and RO cross first. As patrol members reach the far side, they move forward toward the point and reorganize into the formation for movement. **The last patrol member to cross is normally the APL.** The APL crosses along with the flanks and receives a moving head count from the unit leaders.

(2) **Crossing a cross-compartment danger area.** When crossing a draw or open area, the patrol is vulnerable to fire from the **front** and the **flanks**. To combat this threat, the PL orients the majority of the patrol's firepower across the danger area.



(a) Flanks recon to edge of the danger area and establish flank security. The PL designates near and far side rally points.

(b) The main body positions on the near side to cover the security unit during its recon of the far side.

(c) PL directs security unit to recon the far side.

(d) The security unit crosses tactically, ensuring good all around security. On the far side, a far side (zig-zag) recon is conducted. When the recon is complete, the security unit leader signals the PL that it is safe to cross.

(e) The patrol may cross in pairs or by unit with the headquarters unit (including the flanks) crossing first. Once across, the flanks orient to the sides and rear to cover the remainder of the patrol's crossing. The APL then directs the crossing of the remainder of the patrol.

(f) Once on the far side, the patrol reorganizes into its formation for movement, APL receives a head count from the unit leaders and the patrol continues its movement.

9. ACTIONS ON ENEMY CONTACT

a. Patrol leaders must anticipate, plan, and rehearse actions to be taken on enemy contact. These planned and rehearsed actions are called **immediate action drills** and are designed to provide swift, positive action or reaction to visual or physical contact. Emphasis is placed on aggressive, rapid execution and alertness by all patrol members.

b. The following immediate action drills are planned for and rehearsed.

(1) **Freeze.** The signal to freeze is used when the patrol is in imminent danger of being spotted. All patrol members cease all movement and attempt to spot the enemy.

(2) **Hasty ambush.** Used when the patrol has spotted the enemy but the enemy has not spotted them. All patrol members quietly move into a position where they can fire upon the enemy when the PL signals to open fire. Unit leaders must ensure front and flank security is maintained during this IA drill. (See Figure 6.)

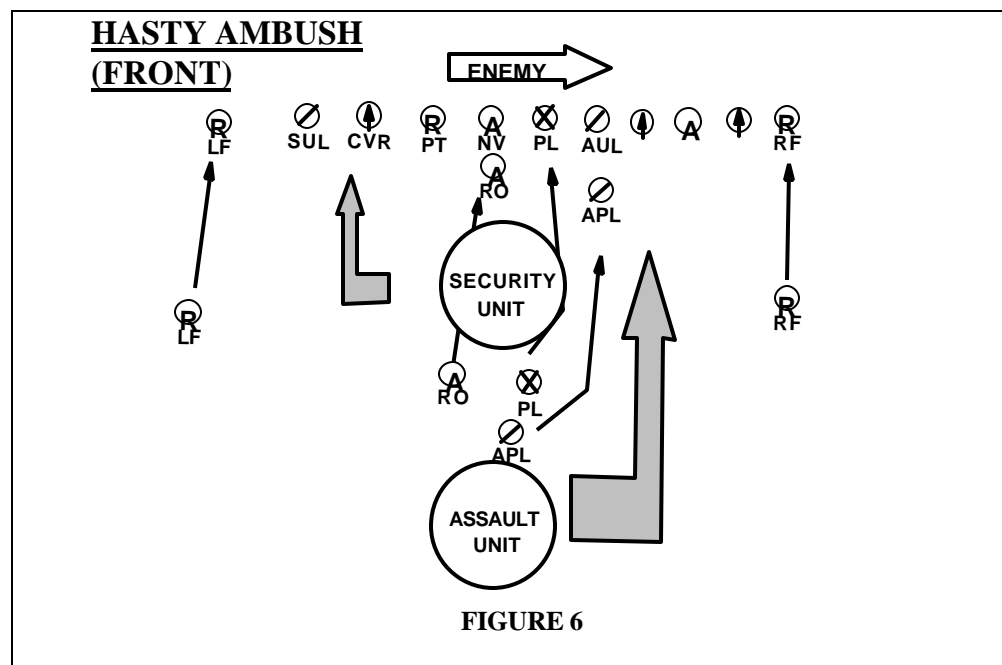
(a) Freeze is signaled by the Marine who sees or hears the enemy.

(b) Once the enemy is identified, the PL signals "hasty ambush" in the direction the ambush will be oriented.

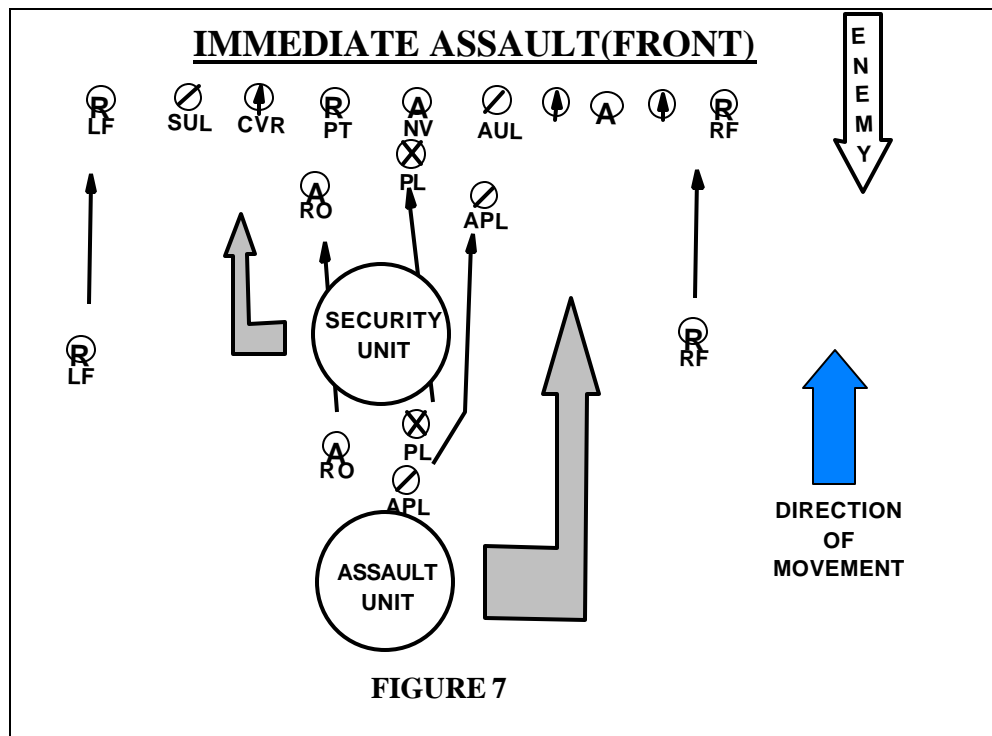
(c) Patrol members quickly and quietly move into a line formation.

(d) If any patrol member is prematurely detected by the enemy, he will initiate the ambush, while the remainder of the patrol moves rapidly on line. The PL conducts an immediate assault or breaks contact.

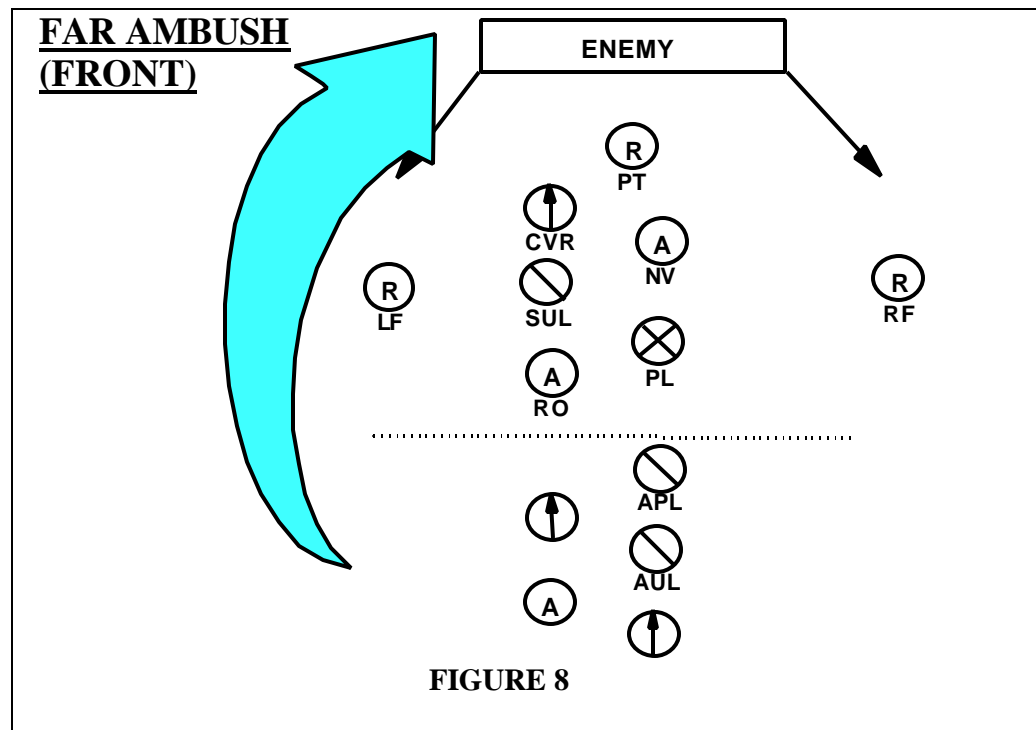
(e) The PL normally gives the signal to initiate the ambush if the patrol is not detected.



(3) **Immediate Assault (Chance Contact).** Used when the patrol and the enemy spot each other at the same time. Generally, the patrol will employ fire and movement against the enemy. (See Figure 7.)



- (a) The patrol member in contact returns fire and orients the patrol by shouting the direction and distance to the enemy.
 - (b) The patrol rapidly deploys on line though at least one man remains back to cover the patrol's rear.
 - (c) On the basis of the PL's estimate of the situation, the patrol either assaults the enemy or breaks contact.
 - (d) If the patrol is receiving effective fire, the patrol either assaults or breaks contact by fire and movement.
 - (e) The use of a base unit can facilitate the transition into an assault formation.
- (4) **Counterambush/far ambush.** Used when the enemy fires on the patrol are **outside handgrenade range**. Members of the patrol who are in the enemy's kill zone establish a base of fire and members of the patrol who are not in the enemy's kill zone attempt to maneuver against the enemy position. (See Figure 8.)



(a) Marines caught in the kill zone of a far ambush return fire, get down, seek cover, establish a base of fire and **try to achieve fire superiority**.

(b) Marines not caught in the kill zone deploy to support those in the kill zone by fire and maneuver.

(c) The PL may also choose to immediately break contact.

(5) **Counterambush/near ambush.** Used when the enemy opens fire on the patrol **within handgrenade range**. In this case, the patrol must rapidly get out of the kill zone. Generally, the patrol will employ fire and movement against the enemy position. (See Figure 9.)

(a) Individuals caught in the kill zone of a near ambush, without order or signal, immediately fire at the enemy and exit the kill zone as rapidly as possible. The most expedient exit for members near the enemy and in his field of fire may be an aggressive assault directly towards the enemy position.

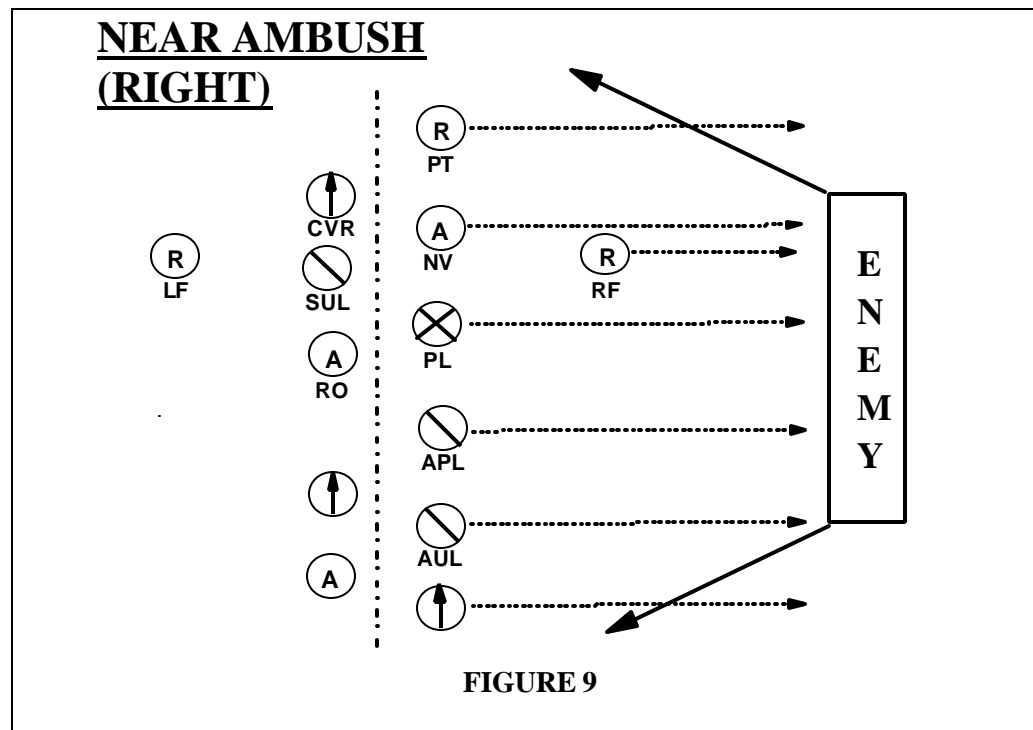
(b) Any individuals not in the kill zone must maneuver against the enemy to alleviate the pressure within the kill zone.

(c) The attack is continued to either eliminate the ambush or break contact.

(6) **Break contact.** Used when the patrol is in visual or physical contact with the enemy and the PL chooses not to become decisively engaged. The patrol uses the clock method with 12 o'clock oriented to the original direction of movement. Contact can be broken by moving as a patrol or by having units or teams use fire and movement. Smoke, as well as CS (as long as it has been authorized by the appropriate authority: MAGTF, JTF, NCA, etc.) can be used to screen this movement.

(7) **Indirect fire.** Any patrol member may initiate this drill upon realizing indirect fire is inbound. The patrol assumes the prone when "Incoming" is sounded. The PL then has the patrol break contact out of the impact area after the initial salvo has impacted. Direction is given via the clock method, with 12 o'clock being the original direction of movement.

(8) **Air attack.** In today's world of increasingly sophisticated aircraft, the greatest threat to patrols can be heavily armed helicopters. To combat this, good concealment is paramount. The patrol leader designates at least one air sentry to watch the surrounding airspace. If a threat aircraft spots the patrol, the formation must quickly disperse and seek cover. If the patrol is attacked while in open terrain, Marines should disperse perpendicular to the aircraft's line of flight. If the patrol can engage the aircraft, then the fires should be concentrated at a point along the direction of flight (refer to the small unit air defense portion of B0319.2, *Marine Battle Skills*).



10. REENTRY OF FRIENDLY LINES

a. The patrol conducts a long security halt at the designated reentry rally point (RRP). The RRP is outside of friendly lines, beyond the range of friendly direct fire weapons, and in a position providing the patrol good cover and concealment. (See Figure 10.)

b. The PL requests permission, via the radio, to reenter friendly lines, using a code word for security and brevity. The PL must **ensure that permission is granted before moving forward to the contact point.**

c. After leaving a 5-point contingency plan with the APL, the moving force (the PL with two men for security) advances to conduct a link-up with a guide(s) (stationary force) at a pre-designated contact point.

d. The moving force initiates the far recognition signal and the stationary unit responds (this may be done via radio when requesting to reenter friendly lines). As the patrol moves closer to the contact point, the stationary unit (guide) initiates the near recognition signal and the patrol responds.

e. Upon link-up, the PL will move back to the RRP, leaving one man for security with the guide at the CP, where he will update the plan if required.

f. The PL then moves the patrol from the RRP to the passage point tactically, shrinking flank security inboard enroute to ensure transition to a dispersed file by the time the patrol reaches the passage point.

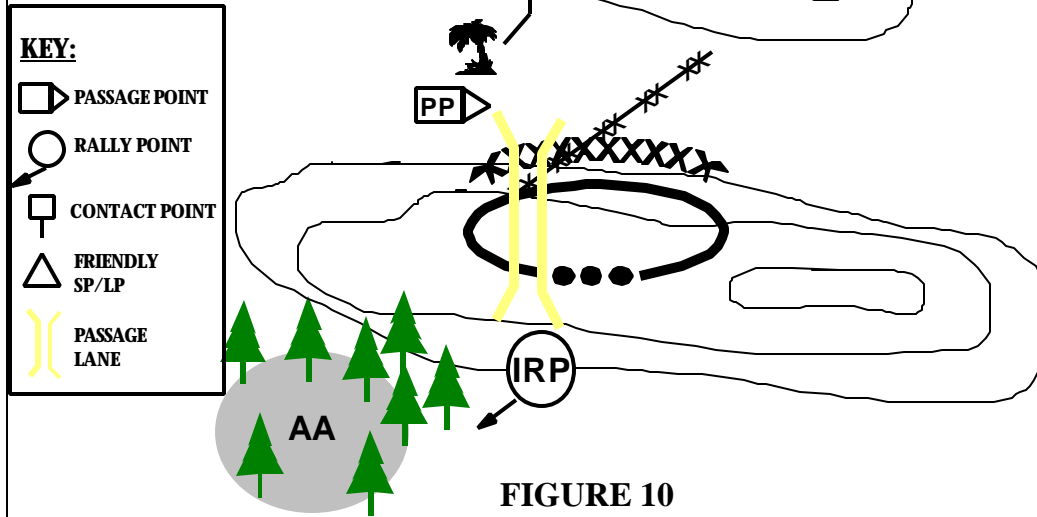
g. The guide(s) then leads the patrol from the contact point into the barrier plan (passage point).

h. At the passage point, the PL with one Marine for security, counts all members into the passage lane to ensure that all are accounted for and that no enemy infiltrators attempt to slip in with the patrol.

i. The PL then provides the forward unit commander with a SALUTE/SPOT report containing information of immediate tactical value (e.g., enemy contact or sightings).

j. The PL then takes his patrol to the S-2 or his designated representatives for the patrol debrief.

PASSAGE OF LINES CONTROL MEASURES



11. **SUMMARY.** The patrolling exercise will allow you to execute all the techniques and procedures described in this handout. These and other upcoming field exercises will give you a practical understanding of basic jungle/forested patrolling concepts and techniques. Future classes and student handouts discuss the planning and execution considerations necessary to conduct **ambush**, **reconnaissance**, and **urban patrols**.

APPENDIX A

FAR SIDE RECON TECHNIQUES

1. ZIG-ZAG RECON

ADVANTAGES

<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	quick and easy to control
	security unit moves as one unit
	generally effective regardless of visibility and terrain
	does not require patrol members to linkup at the end of the recon

DISADVANTAGES

	does not cover as much area as the other recon techniques	
	recon is generally limited to the route selected	
	not generally the preferred technique when vegetation is	sparse and visibility
observation good		

2. BOX RECON

ADVANTAGES

<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	generally covers more terrain than the zig-zag recon	
	most effective during periods of <u>good</u> visibility and in	sparsely vegetative terrain

DISADVANTAGES

	difficult to control	
	security unit is split during the recon	
	takes a great deal of time	
	precise navigation is required for linkup at the end of the	recon
	not an effective technique during periods of reduced	visibility or in areas of heavy
vegetation		

3. HEART SHAPE RECON

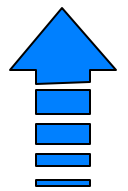
ADVANTAGES

<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	generally covers more terrain than the zig-zag recon	
	most effective during periods of <u>good</u> visibility and in	sparsely vegetative terrain

DISADVANTAGES

	difficult to control	
	security unit is split during the recon	
	takes a great deal of time	
	precise navigation is required for linkup at the end of the	recon
	not an effective technique during periods of reduced	visibility or in areas of heavy
vegetation		

LONG SECURITY HALT



DIRECTION
OF
MOVEMENT

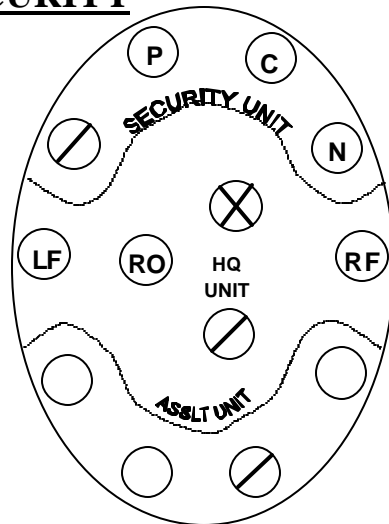


FIGURE 2

CROSSING A CROSS - COMPARTMENT DANGER AREA



DIRECTION
OF
MOVEMENT

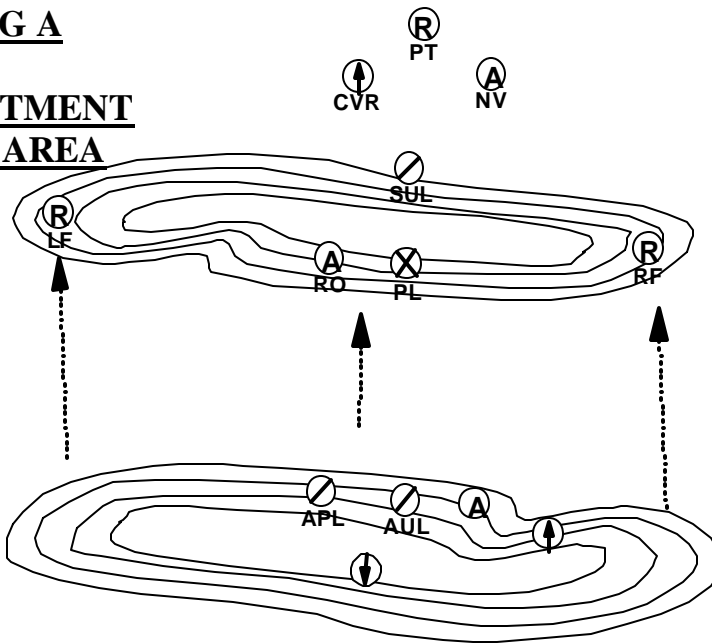


FIGURE 5b

